
PUBLISHED

By Her Majesty's Command.

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A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Q U E E N,

At W H I T E - H A L L,

On the 16th. Day of JULY, 1690.

B E I N G T H E
M O N T H L Y - F A S T.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
GILBERT Lord Bishop of SARUM.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Ric. Chiswell* at the *Rose and Crown* in
St. *Paul's* Church-yard, MDCXC.



THE
Bishop of Salisbury's
FAST-SERMON
Before the QUEEN.

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SEER MON

OF THE

MONTHLY

By the High School of the City of New York

Printed by the City of New York

1

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN.

At WHITE-HALL, &c.

Psal. Lxxxv. Ver. 8.

*I will bear what God the Lord will speak, for he
will speak Peace unto his People, and to his
Saints: but let them not turn again to Folly.*

IN all the various Turns of *David's* Life, we
find him neither so much lifted up with
Success, nor depressed with Misfortune,
that he went off from that Confidence in
God, which was his Basis, and on which
all his Hopes rested; when he was beset with
thousands of people that had compassed him round
about, he was not afraid, but laid himself down in
peace and slept, for it was God only that made him
to dwell in safety: and when his Afflictions grew
so high, that once his own People spake of stoning
him,

Psal. 3. 6.

Psal. 4. 8.

1 Sam. 30. 6.

him, yet even then when he had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And when a happy reverse of his affairs raised him to a vast Elevation, and a Series of great Successes covered him with so much Glory, that all his Enemies did fall or fly before him; this change of his condition wrought no change in his mind, unless it were to the better, he employing the hours of that Tranquillity which he had procured to himself, and to his People, in composing this Book of *Psalms*, in which by a happy intermixture of the two charmingest things in the World, *Poetry* and *Musick*, he studied to raise in himself and in his People, the loftiest Thoughts of God, and the most grateful acknowledgments of his Mercies that was possible.

There is somewhat in Misfortune and Affliction that gives Men naturally a Cast towards Religion and Devotion. For, the Mind being driven in upon it self, and forced to think much, if it is apt to be overcharged with Melancholy, then it encreases its trouble by severe Thoughts, drawn from the Considerations of Religion; but if it is naturally gay and cheerful, then it entertains it self with such a pleasant prospect of Hope, as Religion proposes. Thus it is so common to all men in trouble to look towards God, that unless the mind is strongly fortified against those Impressions, they will then break in upon it. But the Charms of Ease and Prosperity, of Greatness and Glory, do soon defeat all those good thoughts, which arise out of blacker circumstances; the mind stays no more within it self,

self, but is softened with pleasures, and dissipated with business or folly, and retains neither its former wise thoughts nor good resolutions; yea, that very Devotion which was ones Sanctuary and Relief in the evil day, becomes matter of Raillery in the daies of mirth and safety.

How different from all this was this great King, who though he was raised from a low condition to an high dignity, which often brings a Giddiness over weak minds, that cannot bear such an unlookt-for progress in their Fortunes, and that extraordinary Merits, a high Courage, a wise Conduct, and great Vertues made, that his advancement might be considered, as the Effect as well as the Reward of his worth; yet he ascribes all his Deliverances, all his Victories, and all his Glory, wholly to the Goodness of God, and to his great designs, in which he was employed as an Instrument, that how glorious soever it might be, was yet only an Instrument in the hands of that Eternal Mind that raises up and uses all persons in subserviency to those ends, for which all things were made, and do still subsist. In these his Raptures he did not think it would derogate from his glory, to acknowledg, that he did not trust in his Bow, neither did his Sword save him, but that it was God that had saved him from his Enemies, and had put them to shame that hated him; that God was his Refuge and Strength; that vain was the strength of man; that a King was not delivered by the multitude of an Host, nor was a mighty man delivered by much Strength; that God was his Deliverer, and his Shield, in whom he trusted, that subdued the People,

ple under him that gave salvation to Kings, and that delivered David his servant from the hurtful sword.

The Conquests and the Treasures of David are perhaps, Objects which strike the minds of some Princes, while his Courage and his Wisdom raise a nobler Ambition in others. But alas, shall his Piety and Devotion have no force to work on great Minds, raised to great Dignities, who, how much soever they may be exalted above the rest of Mankind, yet still in comparison to God, and when put *in the balance with him, they are altogether lighter than vanity.* What a new face would the World put on, if it were governed by Princes of such a temper, as appears in David, when he composed this Psalm, of which my Text is a part. He begins it with a grateful remembrance of the Deliverances of former times, and particularly of their being redeemed out of the Bondage their Fathers suffered in the Land of Egypt. *Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land, thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob, thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin, thou hast taken away all thy wrath, thou hast turned thy self from the fierceness of thine anger.* These are both acknowledgments of past Mercies, and encouragements to hope for a return of the like Blessings, since such extraordinary favours were marks of a particular care and kindness that seemed to watch over them. From these he proceeds to an earnest Intercession for the People, who it seems were then under signal characters of God's displeasure :

Turn

Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease: Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee? *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.* Words of great tenderness, that express both a deep sense of God's anger, and a most earnest desire of being again restored to his favour! After these comes my Text, which carries in it a Poetical Allusion to the consulting of the Cloud of Glory, which was between the Cherubims, and to the receiving Answers from it, upon all critical occasions. *David* turned his thoughts from all the other views, he might have, to this, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak*, that so he might depend wholly on the assurances that he should receive of God's favour, upon the Repentance and Prayers of the People; and in consideration of God's Covenant with them, he knew the answer would be *Peace*; which being the form of Salutation in those Ages, among Friends, imported an intire reconciliation. So that by *speaking Peace*, is to be understood an assurance of God's love and favour to his People, and to his Saints; that is, to the People that was sanctified, and dedicated to the service of God by so many federal Rites. The words that follow are capable of different renderings, either thus, *to his Saints, and to such as turn not again to folly*, or, *and they shall not turn again to folly*; or as it is in our Translation, and *let them not turn again unto folly*. The LXX. Interpreters differ much more, but the enlarging on any account of those various renderings, would

Pfal. 14. 1.
Jer. 5. 21.
& 10. 8. &
23. 13.

require too long and too dry a Discourse for a day of this kind. *Folly* in Scripture stands often for Atheism and Impiety; *The fool has said in his heart, that there is not a God.* Sometimes for Idolatry, there being no instance of folly that is more extravagant, than the giving divine Honours to the works of Mens Hands, or to the Fictions of their vain Imaginations: but most commonly the irregularities of Vice are set forth in Scripture under this notion, to shew how contrary they are to all the Principles of true Reason that are in our natures. The words being thus opened, lead me to speak to these Three Heads.

I. That the great security and happiness of a Nation depends on its being at peace with God, and in his favour; and that its greatest danger and misery arises out of God's anger and displeasure.

II. That therefore it is necessary to use most earnest and fervent Prayers, for removing God's anger, and for the procuring his favour: And that our great encouragements to this, are the remembrance of past Deliverances, and the consideration of the Attributes of God, who is naturally gracious and merciful.

III. That a Nation which would secure to it self the continuance of God's favour, and of all the Blessings that accompany it, must above all things take care of not relapsing into Vice and Idolatry, Ungodliness and Atheism.

To

To return: *The greatest Security and Happiness of a Nation, depends on its being at peace with God, and in his favour: And its greatest Danger and Misery arises out of God's anger and displeasure.* Either this is true (let our scoffers make it the subject of their profane Mirth as much as they will) or there is nothing true in all Religion. If God is infinitely Wise and Perfect, and if he made the World, which they pretend to own, then certainly he still takes care of it: For nobody can deny a Providence, that does not likewise in his heart deny a God, and a Creation. The Prejudices against Providence arise chiefly from the narrowness of our Minds, that cannot conceive how one Being can have an extended and universal care of all things: But is not the prejudice of a blind Man against the possibility of seeing, as well grounded? For how extravagant must this appear to him, that through so small a passage as the Pupil of the Eye, such a vast variety of Objects should enter at once, and open themselves within the body of the Eye without confusion, and there be represented to us in their just figures, with their distance from us, and from one another; and in their Colours, which he cannot understand neither, and that thus at a great distance we can reason and judge of things: To one that perceives nothing but by touch, this will appear very unconceivable. If then the good disposition of an Organ raises one Man so far above another, that he cannot apprehend how such an extent of perception is possible, it is a most un-

reasonable thing to conclude against any Perfection in the Divine Mind, because it is beyond our compass of thought. The other prejudice against Providence seems a little better grounded, which is, That in the government of the World there is such an irregularity, that it cannot be supposed to flow from a Good and a Wise Being: But this is likewise an effect of the shortness of our Prospect, we seeing only things that are before us, but not being able to guide our Eye further to the end of the Scene, nor to what Revolutions or Catastrophes are abiding those who at present seem covered with Success and Glory. But if we believe God to be the infinitely Pure and Holy, we must likewise believe that he loves those that are truly good, and are conformable to his own nature, and that he has an aversion to those who are contrary to it, and that are defiled and impure: For the Principle of Self-love that is natural to every Being, makes it love such as resemble it, and hate such as are in an opposition to it; not by a hatred of anger and fury, which is the effect of Passion and Disorder, by a hatred which arises out of the contrariety of nature that is between them. It is then, as certain as that there is a God, that he is perfectly Pure and Holy, and that by consequence such Nations as are vertuous and innocent, that are neither false nor cruel, vicious nor dissolute, must be more acceptable to him, and more constantly protected by him, than those that are corrupted by sensuality and luxury into all the degeneracies of humane Nature, and into a scorn of Religion and Vertue.

But

But though it is certain, that such debauched Nations are under the Divine Displeasure, yet as to the properest time, and the suitablest circumstances, in which God will pour out his Indignation upon them; and as to the ballancing of the sins of one Nation against another, and the delivering one over to be plagued by another, till the one is purged, and the other has filled up the measure of its Iniquities, those are Secrets lodged in that Infinite mind, into which our sight can carry us but a very little way.

Upon the whole matter, if there is a God that made the World, he governs it; and if he is wise and holy, he must govern it so as to favour the Good, and to hate the Wicked. If any object to this, the long-flourishing of the *Turkish Empire*, and the strange Progress and Success of *Mahometism*, the Answer is plain enough, That the *Eastern Christians* were so far degenerated from all that is pure and noble in the Christian Religion, that they were become a Reproach to it, and therefore God has delivered them up into so long a Captivity, and has rewarded the Temperance, the Justice, and the Aversion to Idolatry, that are among the *Mahometans*, with so long a course of Prosperity. If the Reign of some Princes, that have broken through the Faith of Oaths and Treaties, and through all the sacredst Rules of Justice and Mercy, has hitherto had a course of Success and Glory, to which we find nothing that can be compared in History since *Augustus's* days; yet even to this it must be said, That we can form no true Judgment of it till we see to the end of it: And even this is
only

only a Personal Success, for that the Nation that is the Scene of that Prince's Glory, may suffer as much under him, if not more, than it could have done from any Enemy; since all the Protection that they enjoy under him is, that they are preserved from the Impressions of others: that they may be the entire Prey of the Lawless Power, that devours them and all their Substance, and employs it in the support of his Injustice, and Cruelty. Besides, the great decays of true Religion among all those Churches that carry the Name *Reformed*, may have required an exemplary chastisement to awaken and purify them; and the slow progress that they make in this, may have occasioned so long a continuance and increase of Glory in him whom God has made the Rod of his Anger for correcting them. But when that end of Providence is once fulfilled, we may then reasonably hope to see that Persecutor, who is swelled up upon his success, become the object of as much Scorn as he has been hitherto of Flattery. But alas! our Impenitence and Irreligion keeps off still that day, and our Immoralities and Vices do still feed his Pride, and furnish him new matter of Triumph and Glory.

In a word, nothing needs be further said for a fuller proof of this matter, than that those very Sins that provoke the wrath of God, do likewise dissolve and corrupt all that is great or noble in human nature; falsehood dissolves the mutual Confidences and Union of a Nation, without which it must act feebly and move irregularly, as a disjointed body. Cruelty brings a barbarity on mens natures, which makes them incapable

pable of prudent and wise Counfels. Sensuality takes away mens Hearts, their Courage, and their Spirit. But above all things, a brutal Impiety and scorn of Religion cuts all the Banks and Fences of Human Society, and not only sets men loose to all their Appetites and Passions, by taking off all inward checks and restraints, but begets a sort of boisterousness and insolence in their Tempers, so that they become incapable of Order and Conduct, and equally unfit both for Council and Execution.

How much of all this belongs to us is but too visible! Would to God it were but a Secret, and not too notorious and publick! Where is the ancient gravity and composure of Behaviour that made a large part of the Character of this Nation? Where is the Truth and Fidelity which was formerly one of the distinctions of *Englishmen*? Where is the Good-nature and Generosity that was the Ornament of those that were nobly born? Where are even the Decencies of Religion, or of the Worship of God? What is become of the Love of our Country, and of its ancient Government and Liberty? Has not this shameful Degeneracy of our Morals brought us so low, that there is scarce Virtue enough left, and men enough to be found, that have even a general Tincture of it to save a Nation? Sensuality has run many into such a deep Arrear for Vice, that they cannot be true neither to publick nor private Engagements, and then Employments will be made the Robberies of the Publick, and Vice will swallow up all that Strength and Treasure which should go to the support

support of the Nation. Men are pleased or displeased only as their Vices are fed or starved : Some pretend to be Patriots that are so eminent for Vice, that a Government fixt, and strong enough to reform the Nation, must throw them off as the Scum and Reproaches of it : For let those Sons of *Belial* say what they will, Atheism and Impiety are as destructive to a Nation as they are to a Church. What can secure a man's Honesty, or give life to his Industry ? What can cure all those Diseases under which we languish, but the possessing mens minds with inward principles of Religion, which will make them to become a Law and a Rule to themselves ? What can raise in men a generous love to their Country, which is the root of all Political Virtues, to so high a degree as the Principles of Christian Love and Charity, the sense of an Account to be given to God for all we do, and that noblest Principle of all Religion, the raising up our Natures to become as like the Divine Being as possibly we can ; which will give us a Zeal of doing all the good we can to Mankind, and of being publick Blessings to the Age and Place we live in. These are solid Principles, upon which Vertue is founded, and in these it finds a Root, from which it receives a perpetual encrease. But if Virtue has no other Root but Honour, which is a decenter name for Pride or Humour, there is no strength in this Principle to resist a Temptation that bears hard upon some other corrupt Inclination, especially if one hopes that things may be managed with Art and Secrecy.

But

But on the other hand, what can be desired to make a Nation great and happy, but that which at the same time recommends it to the favour of God? When the Principles of Truth and Goodness, of Sobriety and Temperance, of mutual Love and Kindness, and above all, when an inward strictness in examining ones Actions as in the sight of God, come to possess multitudes of Men, then a Nation may reckon it self safe and happy; because as it comes under a kind and indulgent Providence; so it has a real strength from the vertues of every individual Person, in whom those good qualities live. The World might be well and happily governed with a moderate proportion of Understanding, if there were but a great deal of Vertue under it. For if it were not for Vice and Falshood, which must be watched over carefully, there are not such Mysteries in things, but that they may be easily master'd. Here is then the root of all our evils on the one hand, and the remedy to them all on the other; we have fallen from our ancient Vertues, and our Religion has not force enough to reform or restrain us; we went easily into corruption, when great Examples led and encouraged us to it. But we do not so easily recover out of it, though we have now as bright Examples before us the other way; but this has a contrary operation on depraved Minds, and instead of making them love Vertue & Religion the better for the lustre with which it shines in the Persons of those that govern us, many perhaps love the Government the worse, because they apprehend that Immorality and Impiety will become more odious, less excused, and less protected.

C

protected. But a noble Pattern set by Princes, tho' it is a great thing in it self, yet it is not all that they owe to God, and to their People. It does indeed give them great advantages in reforming their Courts, and their Subjects, when it appears that they do not deny to others the freedoms of Vice, that they may appropriate them to themselves; and that what they do this way, is not a Hypocritical affectation for advancing other designs, but that it is a genuine effect of their own Vertues, a Homage that they pay to God, and an effect of the Love that they bear to their People. And we do not doubt but that every advance that is made in the establishment of the Throne of those whom God has set over us, will be acknowledged by them in such returns of their zeal for God, as we find resolved on by David, *That there eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with them, and that those who walk in a perfect way shall serve them; but that froward and wicked persons, those that work deceit and tell lyes, shall not stay within their house, nor so much as in their sight.* For as God will honour those that honour him, so he likewise expects that such as he has honoured in the sight of all the World, by so many repeated marks of his favour, should honour him not only in their own private deportment, but likewise in the sight of all their People: and how natural soever Clemency may be to them, and how beautiful soever it may appear in them; yet if milder methods cannot reform us, they must at last resolve even to cut off wicked Doers from the City of the Lord.

Then we may carry our Hopes as far as we can do our Wishes, when God is of our side, who commands

mands the Seas and Winds, of which he has given us many and signal instances, and some of these very lately, who confounds the Councils of the wicked, who sometimes takes both their Understanding and their Hearts from them, and at other times strikes them with such panick fears, that one man can chase a thousand of them; and on the other hand, blesses those that depend on him, with happy circumstances, so that the Frame of Nature is of their side, and from those favourable appearances their Courage is raised, and their Spirits are animated so, that nothing can stand in their way. This is often the Portion of those that *fear God*: For, to conclude all, as there is nothing that depresses and misguides men more than superstitious and false Opinions of God and Religion; so there is nothing that does so raise and establish the Mind in every thing that is great and noble as true Principles of Religion, which carry a Man to the highest and best things, of which his nature and faculties are capable.

And thus from a great variety of Considerations it is plain, that the favour of God is the foundation both of the Security & of the Happiness of a Nation. This then leads me very naturally to the Second Head, which is, That it is therefore necessary to use most earnest and fervent Prayers for removing God's anger, and for the procuring his favour.

This can be no indifferent thing, and therefore it is either to be neglected quite, as an empty Dream; or if there is any truth in it, we ought to use all possible means to compass it. If the favour of Princes is pursued with so much Application and

Industry, that all methods both good and bad are made use of for gaining it ; if a constant attendance, and all the arts of pleasing them, how costly or how abject soever, are taken for securing an Interest in them, which perhaps will never succeed, or when gained may prove of small advantage, and may be quickly lost ; what do we make of our Religion, if we own that we believe all these things to be true, and yet will be at no pains to procure to our selves or to our Country an interest in them. Can such cold Devotions as ours are, that in the greatest part are only a compliance with Custom, which we offer up to God without either attention or affection, give us a Title to such invaluable Blessings. We pursue all things with an earnestness of desire, and a strength of thought proportioned to the value that we set on them : And if we are cold and slack only in the matters of Religion, when we over-doe every thing else, this shews that either we do not at all believe them, or that we do not at all value them. I know, earnestness in Prayer is one of the Subjects of the profane mirth of our Scoffers ; they cannot think that God is moved by our earnestness to depart from his own counsels, and therefore they think all fervency in Prayer is a vain heating of the Imagination to no purpose. But though it is certain that our Importunities do not overcome God, though Men are sometimes wearied out with them, and yield to them ; yet he commands us to pray earnestly, and he promises to reward our fervour in Prayer, for this end, that the impressions of Religion, and of our dependance on him, of our impotence without him, and of his goodness and bounty to us, may go deep in our minds. These are the
springs

springs of all Religion and Vertues; and when these are strong in us, they govern us in all our actions. In fact it is certain that none are so powerfully and effectually subdued by the Principles of Religion, as those who are frequent & earnest in Prayer. God having made this the *condition* of bestowing his favours on us, not as it has an effect on himself, to soften and overcome him, but as it has an effect on us to make us serious and good: from hence it appears how reasonable a thing it is for us to pray often and fervently. And in this all good minds may be appealed to, that set themselves often to seek God by *Fasting* and Prayer, if they do not find the happy effects of it upon their minds: That earnest agitation of their Thoughts, which is raised by fervent Prayer, ends in an inward calm, joyned with higher degrees of confidence of God, and upon it, a good temper of mind dwells upon them, their minds grow clearer, and their thoughts brighter: Whereas such as disuse secret Prayer, come under a flatness and deadness in the matter of Religion: It has no life within them, it gives them neither joy nor courage, zeal nor affection: Nor is there any thing to which the visible decay of Religion in this age is so much owing, as to the neglect of secret Prayer; which has prevailed so universally, that whereas in former times it would have passed for a strange thing, if a Man had gone into any business without he had first said his Prayers, it would now be thought ridiculous to hear that a Man was retired to his Prayers: and the using such earnest and tender Expressions as we find here in this Psalm, would pass for a mark of an Enthusiast or an Hypocrite. But let the World think and say what they will, it is by Prayer that our Souls ascend up to God, and draw down all Blessings.

Blessings from him : This is that which removes his displeasure, and procures his favour ; and neither the abuse of it by Hypocrites, nor the scorn cast upon it by Atheists, can lessen its value in the sight of God, nor our obligation to it.

To encourage us to it, we have the consideration of the Nature and Attributes of God : He is gracious, slow to anger, and ready to forgive : Judgment is his strange Work ; whereas Mercy and Compassion are natural to him. It is true, as he is the just and righteous Governour of the World, he must punish when it is necessary, for the maintaining the Order that he has established ; but yet *he afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men* : and therefore we are sure, that upon our turning to him, our praying earnestly, and our repenting sincerely, he will turn from the fierceness of his anger. Of this we are assured, both from his Nature and Attributes, and also from his Promises ; and if those limited degrees of Goodness that are in us bring us under a tenderness of heart and readiness to forgive such as seek to us, had they offended us ever so much, we have much more reason to assure our selves, that God will *speak Peace to us*, upon our supplicating him as we ought to do.

There is in this Psalm another consideration that gives us great encouragement in our Addresses to God for pardon, which is, That in former times, when his People had provoked him to deliver them up to Captivity, he had, upon their repentance, forgiven their Sins, turned away his Anger, and brought again their Captivity. And from those instances of his mercy in past times, *David does expect new proofs of it*, as we may

may also do if we take the same method now which had such effects formerly : The Nature and Promises of God are still the same ; Repentance and Prayer have the same effect at all times. *David* did here encourage himself with the remembrance of the Deliverance of the People out of *Egypt*, when after a long course of oppression, God did with a mighty Hand and an out-stretched Arm bring their Fathers out of that Bondage : and from that time downward, God had often heard them when they groaned under the yoke of Oppressors, into whose hands he had deliver'd them for their sins ; but he had also raised up Instruments, by whose means they were freed from the yoke they lay under. And from those signal instances of God's hearing their Prayers, and being reconciled to them, they had reason to reckon, that the Severities of his Judgments, which at any time broke out upon them, were intended only for their Reformation and Correction. The whole Old Testament contains a Series of History, made up of those varieties ; That People sinned, and were punished ; they repented and were delivered. In conclusion, their Sins were such, that they were given up as a prey to the King of *Babylon*, but after 70 years Captivity, they were brought back, upon the Prayers and Intercessions that *Daniel* and other good men put up to God, according to God's Promises and to the time limited by the Prophets. Upon the perfecting of that Deliverance under *Artaxerxes*, they began to relapse into some of their old Sins ; but *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, who saw well what consequences these Sins must have, and how they might be prevented, engaged them to an early and serious repentance, the good effects of which continued near 300 years : but

but then they corrupted themselves again, upon which they were delivered up into the hands of the Kings of *Syria*, who oppressed them severely, and studied to defile their Temple, and to extirpate their Religion. Upon this they returned to God, and he raised up Deliverers for them, in the persons of *Mathias* and his Sons the *Maccabees*; in whose courage, conduct, and success, we see one of the beautifullest Scenes that is in History. Those Wars did purge them quite from all that mad inclination that had been so long among them, to Idolatry; they flourished and had rest, about an hundred years, till they corrupted their Morals again, and then they fell under the mischiefs of Civil Wars, which made way to their coming first under the Tyranny of *Herod*, and then under the *Roman* Yoke; but under all that oppression they did not as they had done formerly, *Repent and turn unto God*; and tho' first *St. John* the Baptist, afterwards our Saviour himself, and his Apostles after him, particularly *S. James* the Brother of our Lord, ceased not to call on them to *repent*, and threatned them with a final extirpation if they did it not; yet this had no effect, except on some particular persons, the rest hardened themselves in their Immoralities and Hypocrisies: *They killed the Heir, that the Inheritance might be their own*, according to the Parable, and they stoned and slew the rest; and they being so obstinate in their Impenitency, that neither the Calamities they lay under, nor the Messengers sent them from God, could work on them; the Wrath of God at last came upon them to the uttermost, and in so terrible a manner, that their destruction is by much the most tragical piece of History.

Let us next observe in short, the History of the Christian Religion. It is an astonishing thing to see a Doctrine, that by its Rules carries Men to the highest degrees of Purity, and that received so great Authority from all those Miracles that accompanied the first opening of it to the World; yet so soon depraved, even in the Apostles days, by many false Teachers and false Christians; this were an incredible thing, if the Epistles of the Apostles themselves were not full of it. But upon this, God delivered many of them up to the Fury of the Jews, and to the Cruelties of *Nero*; but upon their Repentance they were spared in the final destruction of *Jerusalem*; and though there were some particular Instances of Persecution under *Domitian* and *Trajan*, they passing for a Sect of the Jews; yet after that they had a long Peace of about 140 Years continuance: In which time the Christian Religion did shine in the purity of their Lives, who professed it, and did spread it self over the whole Roman Empire: And the Instances of Severity that were acted in a few Places, gave the Church the Glory of many Martyrs, while the rest were rather encouraged by their Constancy, than terrified with their cruel Deaths. The Writers of those Times do often make their Appeals to the Lives of the Christians, to prove the purity of their Doctrine: Yet Numbers are generally bad, and a long Peace brings naturally with it, a softness on Mens Minds, together with a dissolution of their Morals; of which *S. Cyprian* gives us a particular account, in terms that shew he did not flatter his Side, nor the

Order of the Church, to which he was so great an Honour; for he sets out the Corruptions, as well of the Bishops and Clergy, as of the Laity of his Time, in a stile that is far from Partiality. After this came Persecution after Persecution; but these having the Effect for which they were appointed of God, the Church had again forty Years Peace. But it would offend weak Minds, to hear the words in which *Eusebius* sets forth the Corruption that this brought on the Church: Then came the last Persecution, which continued Ten Years with very little intermission, and with so excessive a Fury, that in the succession of the Persecutors, every one studied to out-do all that had gone before him. Yet these repeated Fires of their Martyrs, kindling another Fire in the Minds of the Christians, and setting them on to Fastings and Prayers, God did at last arise, and sent them a Deliverer, from this Island, *Constantine*, who first gave them Quiet and Liberty, and then Protection and Favour, and then the Christian Religion shined with a new Lustre of Wealth and Prosperity: But, alas, this was not so happy to it as that which the Fires of the Martyrs had given it. The Church did soon degenerate, and the Bishops of the chief Sees fell into Factions: The History of that Time gives us but a sad view of the governing Men of the Church. But yet even there we have a Witness in favour of that Religion that is beyond Exception, I mean *Julian*, who tells his Heathen Priests, in his Zeal for the restoring of Paganism, how both Priests and People ought to imitate the Lives, the Temperance, the

the Gravity, and above all, the Charity that was among the Christians. But insensibly, in the course of an Age, Christianity did so degenerate, that scarce any thing of the first Purity and Simplicity was left. Great Disorders, Irreconcilable Heats, and Differences, and Disputes, even about Authority and Precedence, tore the Church, and exposed it to the Réproaches of its Enemies: And after that God had suffered that Apostacy for a whole Age, it drew at last a Series of Plagues upon them, that amazes every one that reads it. The Western Empire was over-run with an Inundation of Northern Nations, that came so thick one after another, that whatsoever one had spared, seem to be only reserved to be destroyed by the next that came. In a word, the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and the *Huns* brought an unheard-of Destruction along with them; that was followed by Plagues and Famines, to so high a degree, that whole Countries were almost dispeopled. The Eastern Empire was also long wasted by the *Goths* and *Avars*, and then by the *Saracens*, and finally destroyed by the *Turks*. In this Island we received the Christian Religion very early: We had our Martyrs as well as the other Churches, and a particular simplicity of Manners, which is remarked as the peculiar Ornament of our Clergy: But this did not last long, for there followed a vast Corruption among all sorts of People, which is set forth very sincerely and pathetically, by a very good Man that saw it and lamented it, I mean *Gildas*; after that we lost both our Religion and Liberty, and fell under the Saxon Tyranny, than Chri-

stianity got footing again among us, within an Age and an half after that, but it was much allayed and debased; yet, such as it was, it made a great progress, and produced some very good Men, if we may believe *Bede*. But the Nation became rather more corrupt than ever, and then we were delivered over to the Depredations, the Burnings and Cruelty of the *Danes*, which continued at several Reprises, for near two hundred Years to be the Plague of *England*. At last all was melted into one Government, but then the Nation became a Scene of Blood, what during the Competitions to the Crown, the Barons Wars, the Wars with *France*, and those of the Houses of *Tork* and *Lancaster*.

But to take a narrower view of the State of the Protestant Religion, both abroad in the World, and here in *England*, we shall find how often God, for the Sins of those who carried that worthy Name of *Reformed Churches*, but that were not worthy of it, has brought them very low; and what sudden and unlook'd-for Deliverances have again recover'd and restored them. Upon the first opening of the Reformation, all the World run into it. The Corruptions and Ignorance of Popery, were things of which all Men were so weary, that they with joy welcomed the Light and the Purity of the Gospel: but in the multitudes that embraced it, there was a great mixture; many came in only for the Spoil, and threw off the Yoke of all Religion, as well as that of Popery. But God punished this severely; for though they were by much the superior force in *Germany*, which was then the Scene; and

and were secretly favoured both by *England* and *France*, yet all their Strength did melt away, and they dividing their Forces, became an easy Prey to *Charles the 5th*, who got both their Heads, the *Electör of Sax*, and the *Landgrave of Hesse* into his Power, and made all the rest bend under him; only the Town of *Magdeburgh* stood out against him: And in a course of five Years Success, the Protestant Interest was brought so low, that it was every where given for lost, when of a sudden, *Maurice of Saxe*, that had been the chief Instrument of dividing the Party, and of delivering it up to the Emperor, gave Matters so quick a turn, that the Emperor was forced to run out of *Germany*; and he soon saw he could not hope ever to return to it, without granting the Edict of *Passaw*, under which Security the Protestant Religion has subsisted there ever since.

Not many years after that a second Storm arose, King *Edward* died, and while Queen *Mary* persecuted and burnt the Protestants here in *England*, *France* and *Spain* fell under the Ministry of two Cardinals, who seeing that the way which they called *Heresy*, was gaining ground every where, under the shelter of the Wars, they projected and effected a Peace, in order to the Extirpating of *Heresy*; but while this was in agitation, Queen *Mary* died: and soon after, the King of *France* was killed, and left that Kingdom under the feebleness of a long Minority: a Deliverance sprung up also in *Holland*, after many unsuccessful Attempts, by a small company of Fishermen, who seized on the
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Britt, and from Inconsiderable beginnings, falling happily under the Conduct of a Family of Heroes, have grown up to be one of the Powerfulllest Nations that any Age has seen: Here was the second Crisis carried off.

A Third was, when the League of *France* was formed, for the Extirpation of *Protestants*; and that *Spain* at the same time designed the Conquest of *England*, upon which they reckon'd, that the War in the Low-Countries would soon come to an end: but all this was blasted, the *Armada* of Eighty eight was scattered and lost, the Heads of the League were killed, and *Spain* became so feeble, that those were its last efforts. In this Age, from the Year 1620, for ten Years together, the whole *Protestant* Interest was every-where sinking. The Revolution of *Bohemia*, and the Reduction of *Hungary*, raised the House of *Austria* so high, that every thing that stood in their way, fell before them; and all the Attempts made to preserve *Germany*, proved fatal to those who undertook it: then *Holland* was brought very low, by the loss of *Breda*, and the breach among themselves occasioned by the *Arminian* business; the *French* *Protestants* were by the Reduction of *Rochel*, brought to extremities; *England* fell under a feebleness and dis-joynting at home, when of a sudden, the Great *Gustavus*, with a small Army broke through the whole *Austrian* Force, and restored the Liberty of *Germany*, and obliged *France* that needed his Alliance to confirm the Edicts in favour of the *Protestants*; so that Storm went over, and the *Protestant* Religion was again as strong as ever.

The

The next Crisis was in Seventy Two, when the *States* were marked out, to be the First Sacrifice; but we were to have gone next, and Tyranny and Popery were every-where to be established: That Union which had at first such an unlook'd-for success, had almost swallowed up *Holland*, the Inundation breaking in upon them with such a Rapidity, that nothing could stand before it, till a Young Prince, who as he was the Inheritor of the Glory of Four successive Ancestors, every one of whom had Lustre enough to have ennobled a whole Race; so was he designed by Heaven, for a much greater Harvest of Triumph and Glory; till he, I say, stemmed this Torrent by so small a handful at first, that it seemed a tempting of Providence, to have hoped for success, where the Force was so unequal. But his Vertues, and his Valour begot, first Union at home, and then Security abroad; and tho' he could not all at once raise up their Armies to imitate the Pattern he set them; yet, we now see, even in their late misfortune, with what a Spirit of Courage such a *Hero* can inspire an Army. This Crisis went off likewise, and there appeared such Characters of the Protection of God over the *Man*, whom he had made strong for himself; and the State which was thus so gloriously preserved, that all the Worlds looked on this as an Essay of the Great things that Heaven designed to the Age by that Hand, whose first Attempts proved so fortunate.

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The last Crisis in which we still are, began in 85, when within the compass of one Year, Popery was on the Throne here in *England*; it had likewise the *Palatinate* brought under it, and the Protestant Religion was proscribed and Persecuted, both in *France* and *Savoy*. Then the Instruments of the Pride and Cruelty of the Persecutor, reckoned that Heresy was to be extirpated all the World over: There was indeed no visible Hope left, but in him who had begun his Career with so much Glory, and seemed marked out to be the Common Deliverer of *Europe*, as well as the special Blessing of all the Churches of God. I shall not enlarge further on that, with the Sense of which I hope all your Hearts are filled, how ungratefully soever it may be opposed by some, whose Designs, whatever their meaning may be, tend to the bringing us under *French* Tyranny, and Popish Cruelty. When we also consider the special Deliverances of this Church, the Critical Time of *Henry* the Eighth's breaking with *Rome*; and of *Q. Mary's* Death. *Queen Elizabeth's* Glorious Reign; the discovery of the Gunpowder-Treason; the long Peace of Eighty Years with which this Kingdom was blessed; to which there is not any thing that can be compared in our whole History; the easy conclusion of a long and bloody Civil War; the First, and now the Second Preservation of *Ireland*; with the surprising Circumstances of both: What reason have we from all these to conclude, that as God has hitherto
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watched over us, and preserved us in so wonderful a manner, he will still continue to do it? But this last Deliverance of *Ireland* must not be past over in general Words. Can we reflect on the many Dangers to which that *Sacred Life*, on which all ours depend, in so signal a manner, was so lately exposed, without feeling a Commotion within us, that is both melting and tender? for though it is now past, we still tremble to think that it was once so near; while a Hand of Heaven seemed so to lead the Bullet, that though it was suffered to *touch his Anointed*, yet *could do him no Harm*. Do not we look amazed on one another, when we think in what a State we had been, if it had gone deeper; while he that received it, seemed to be the least concerned of all that beheld it. And thus while other Princes take care of their own Safety, and grow proud upon the Glory that their Subjects procure them; He does not think the Regal Dignity bright enough, but as it takes a fresh Lustre from Military Glory. But while we take leave humbly to complain, that he has so little regard to himself, we must with all Thankfulness acknowledg, that this defect of Care in him is fully supplied by the watchfulness of that Providence, on which he does in so particular a manner depend; If our Glory has on another side received an Eclipse, tho even on those less fortunate Occasions we have seen particular Instances of a watchful Providence, while the Winds changed to preserve and favour us; and perhaps it would have been too great a pro-

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vocation to Pride and Security, if we should have had two great Victories at once. Yet if we have failed at this time, What may not we hope from such an Essay, but that Angels watch over him, and that the Head of Angels covers him? and that this retarding of our Deliverance, and darkning of our Glory, is but for a new reserve of Triumph to him; whose Scene of Success is not compleat, till all that false shining, which has so long compared it self to the Sun, is darkned; and that not only *England*, but *Europe*, is by his Means delivered from all their Fears and Dangers.

But how far soever such a Subject may carry me, I must not suffer you to forget that which remains of my Text, *But let them not turn again to Folly.* I shall not dwell here upon so beaten a Path, as the shewing you the Madness and Follies of Vice. You have so many Instances of so great force found about you to demonstrate this, that it is needless to enlarge upon the Breaches that Vice makes on Mens Persons, and their Estates, on their Reputation and Courage; its wasting their Spirits, and depressing their Minds, are such visible things, and have shewed us so many Wrecks on all hands, that we must needs see how just and reasonable it is to bring all these Disorders under the denomination of Folly. Idolatry is also such a debasing the Nature, both of God and of Man, by which the Idea's of God are brought so low, and our Natures are so affronted, while we prostrate our selves be-
fore

fore the Works of Mens Hands, or the Fictions of their Minds, that this is also *Folly*, and a *Folly* of so strange a kind, that it is not easy to imagine that Humane Nature should be capable of it: But no *Folly* is more extravagant than that of imagining that things were made, and are preserved by Chance, or Fate, without the directions of a wise and good Being: And that either there is no God, nor Maker of all Things; or if there is one, that he has abandoned the Works of his Hands, that he does not see through the thick Cloud, that it is in vain to serve him, and that his Wrath is but a Word, made use of by crafty Men to frighten Fools. This is the Language of Scoffers, and a degree of *Folly* beyond all others, even the venturing upon Eternal Misery, upon the maddest set of Principles that ever were put together. These are the Follies that we must guard against, lest if after God has delivered us once more, we should again relapse into them, and that then our latter End should prove worse than the Beginning.

If God should now according to the Riches of his Grace deliver us from all our Enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us, and should establish that which he has wrought for us, and add to the Settlement of his true Religion, and the happy Constitution both of Church and State among us, a secure and honourable Peace, a fullness of Plenty, and a freedom of Trade, and should carry the Glory of our Sovereigns so high, as to make them

the Arbiters of Christendom, and the Protectors of all Protestants. If I say, after so great an accession of Wealth and Prosperity, of Success and Glory to us, we should then give our selves up to our Vices, as if all our Blessings were only intended to furnish out our Luxury with all the variety of Entertainments; if we should grow proud of the Ancient Valour of our Nation, while we degenerate from it our selves; and by despising our Neighbours, should both make them stronger, and our selves weaker; if we should take up our Animosities, as if we had only made a Truce with one another; while we had a mighty Enemy to deal with, and so would revive these Follies, which God has by an Interposition of so many Providences called on us to forget; if we of the Church should forget all our promises, and resolve to yield nothing for the gaining of our Brethren, but should let our Minds rather be soured with the old Leaven of bitterness and malice. If those who depart from us, should rather study to strengthen their Party, than to hearken to the Counsels of Peace; if those of a higher Rank, should become swell'd with Pride, or softned with Voluptuousness; If the Clergy should become Lazy, Covetous, and Ambitious; and the whole Nation should again break loose into open Vice, and divide into Parties and Factions: But above all, if Impiety and Blasphemy, Scoffing and Atheism, should again be in vogue, and pass for Wit and Spirit, then upon so fatal an abuse of God's Mercies, we should have reason to look for Judgments as eminent, as such our Ingratitude should be; and that the return of Wrath should be so heavy, that

that our Portion should be to perish with an everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. But if we become so wise, and so good as to improve the Deliverance that is already come to us, and those which we have in prospect, to the Noble ends for which they are design'd by God, then we may expect to see an accomplishment of all the other Blessings which *David* promises to himself, and to his people in this Psalm, *That Mercy and Truth should meet together, and Righteousness and Peace should kiss each other.* That a Spirit of Truth, and Honesty, and Love, and Charity, should run through the whole Nation, and knit it altogether in one Body; that *Truth* should become so natural to them, that like the growth of the Earth, it should *spring up* of it self; and that *Righteousness* should like a dew from Heaven, cover the whole Land; that God should bless them with every good thing, and that they should have a rich Soil and fruitful Seasons; and that Deliverances should be near or present at every return of Danger, for preserving those that fear God; and the top of all, that *Glory* should dwell in their Land: By which is to be understood that Cloud of Glory which was between the Cherubims; and was the Symbol of God's Presence among them; that is, That the True Religion, with all the happy Characters of God's Favour, should be still continued among them, by which they were the Glory of all Lands, and all the Nations of the Earth were to be blest in them: This as applied to us, is, that God may establish and

and continue his True Religion among us, that he may watch over, and preserve those whom he has set over us; and that as their Lives have been hitherto a Series of Wonders, so he may perfect that which concerns them; and bless the Work of their Hands; and that the whole Nation may return to its Ancient Honesty and Vertue; and that all Differences and Divisions may be composed, we being animated with good Heart, and one Spirit; and that to all this, the Blessings of Peace and Plenty may be joined: which God of his Infinite Mercy grant, through Jesus-Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

FINIS.

Books

Books lately Printed for Richard Chiswell.

- B**ishop Burnet's Sermon before the King and Queen on *Christmas-day*, 1689. on 1 *Tim.* 3. 16.
 — His Sermon of Peace and Union, *Nov.* 26. 1689. on *Mat.* 5. 23.
 — His Fast-Sermon at *Bow-Church*, *March* 12. 1692. on *Luke* 19. 41, 42.

Some Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of *Piedmont*. By *P. Allix*, D. D. 4°.

Geologia: Or, A Discourse concerning the Earth before the Deluge, wherein the Forts and Properties ascribed to it, in a Book intitled [*The Theory of the Earth*] are excepted against. And it is made appear, That the Dissolution of that Earth was not the Cause of the Universal Flood. Also a new Explication of that Flood is attempted. By *Erasmus Warren*, Rector of *Worlington* in *Suffolk*.

A Private Prayer to be used in Difficult Times.

A Thanksgiving for our late wonderful Deliverance: [recommended chiefly to those who have made use of the Prayer in the late Difficult Times.]

A Prayer for perfecting our late Deliverance, by the happy Success of their Majesties Forces by *Sea* and *Land*.

A Prayer for Charity, Peace and Unity, chiefly to be used in *Lein*.

- Dr. Tinnion's* Sermon of Discretion in giving Alms, 12°. on *Psal.* 112. 3.
 — His Fast-Sermon before the House of Commons, *June* 5. 1689.
 — His Sermon concerning doing Good to Posterity. Preached before Their Majesties at *Whitehall*, on *Feb.* 16. 1692. on *Psal.* 78. 3, 6.

- Dr. Wake's* Lent-Sermon before the Queen, *April* 2. 1690. on 1 *Tim.* 5. 22.
 — His *Easter*-Sermon before the Lord Mayor, 1690. on *Gal.* 6. 10.
 — His Sermon before the King and Queen, *May* 4. 1690. on *Luke* 18. 25.

Bishop of *Chichester's* Fast-Sermon before the King and Queen, *April* 16. 1690. on *Prov.* 23. 34.

A new History of the Succession of the Crown of *England*. And more particularly from the Time of King *Egbert*, till *Henry the 8th*. Collected generally from those Historians who wrote of their own Times; and who consequently were the best Witnesses and Relators of the Actions done therein.

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